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Latin America Report

(FOUO 3/82)



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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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ENERGY ECONOMICS

DOMINICA

BRIEFS

HYDROELECTRIC STUDY--Canada is funding studies for a country-wide hydro-electric system. The money will come through CIDA, and a feasibility study will be carried out by the national electrical co-operative association based in the United States. The aim of the study is to find suitable areas for small-scale hydro-electric generating units in the north, north-east and south of the island. Part of the proposed plan will also involve offering cheap electricity to industry setting up in the eastern part of the island. The country's electricity system is owned by the London-based Commonwealth Development Corporation, which is in trouble with the British government over further funding. The government would like to buy out the British organisation's shares, but does not have the money. [Text]
[London LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL REPORTS--CARIBBEAN in English 15 Jan 82 p 12]
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COUNTRY SECTION

BAHAMAS

ECONOMY IN TROUBLE ON MANY FRONTS; UNEMPLOYMENT RISING

London LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL REPORTS--CARIBBEAN in English 15 Jan 82 pp 10-11

[Text] The slump in tourism and a rising import bill mean that the once stable Bahamian economy is facing difficulties which can only aggravate the country's severe social problems. Foreign debt, unemployment and crime are all on the increase.

'In spite of all the mistakes that we have made, we have saved our people from the frustration, deprivations and tragedies that have overtaken other human societies,' finance minister Arthur Hanna observed at the conclusion of his 1982 budget address. The claim was hardly supported by his figures, which clearly showed the extent of the country's economic problems.

Tourism, which accounts for some 60 per cent of GNP and over 56 per cent of government revenue, is in deep trouble (RC-81-08). The 18 per cent drop in earnings from US\$595.5m in 1980 to US\$488.3m last year has pushed the industry back to pre-1978 levels. The decline in real terms was even more steep, given an average annual inflation rate of 10 per cent over the past three years.

Hanna's prediction that increased air and cruise ship services and more competitive pricing would produce an early turnaround is belied by the administration's own calculations. Government revenues from tourism, including departure, hotel occupancy and casino taxes, are all projected to fall below 1981 estimates and to increase only 12 per cent more than the US\$24m actually derived in 1980.

Customs duties, fed largely by tourist demand, are expected to drop to US\$156.8m, some US\$12.8m below 1981's projections, and only 9.7 per cent more than actual earnings in 1980. Stamp tax revenues, derived mainly from property sales, and reflecting the level of foreign investment, are budgeted at US\$16.3m, down US\$3.7m over 1981 estimates, and just 3.2 per cent more than was realised in 1980. Together these three categories represent 88 per cent of the government's tax revenue and 65.5 per cent of all projected government revenue for 1982.

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Hanna offered several reasons for the tourism decline. Besides the present worldwide recession, he cited the US air traffic controllers' strike, depreciation of European currencies against the dollar, and a series of blackouts in Nassau during the height of the summer. The industry, he admitted, was also adversely affected by bad publicity surrounding the drug trafficking problem and the government's land sales restrictions. Other factors ignored by Hanna but recognised by the ministry of tourism were visitor dissatisfaction and the explosive increase in crime.

Meanwhile an additional 1,697 hotel rooms are expected to come into use over the current year, 730 of them under the aegis of the government-owned Hotel Corporation. The corporation, which already controls six resort properties and the country's three casinos, has been losing money on its hotel operations since its formation in 1974. By 1979, the last date for which financial statements are available, the hotels had lost some US\$20m, apart from the US\$40m investment made by the government for their purchase, refurbishing and operating costs.

Last year the corporation borrowed an additional US\$150 to build the present hotel/convention facility. The loan catapulted the national debt from US\$280.1m in mid-1981 to US\$420m at the end of the year. Public debt servicing this year is expected to jump from US\$45.1m to US\$64.5m, making it by far the largest budget appropriation.

Another US\$55.6m has been earmarked for education, the main area of government spending over the last 14 years. Nonetheless the Bahamas today is faced with a 'critical shortage' of skilled manpower on the one hand, and a 'fairly large number of untrained, unemployed or under-employed people' on the other, Hanna admitted. The reason, according to education Minister Darrell Rolle, has been the government's lop-sided emphasis on academic to the exclusion of technical education.

The result is an unemployment rate which the government placed at 26.3 per cent in 1977 and 16.6 per cent in 1979, a boom year for the Bahamas. The figures were based only on New Providence and Grand Bahama, the two major population centres, and ignored the situation in 18 other islands. With the present recession, a 2.14 per cent population growth rate and a labour force that is expanding by some 5,000 people annually, the number of unemployed is believed to have once more exceeded 20 per cent.

Although the government is now trying to rectify the imbalance through improved teacher training and the development of basic skills by students, the

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damage perpetrated by the educational system is responsible for most of the country's present difficulties. Protracted unemployment has destroyed the work ethic for thousands of young people and fostered the rapid increase in crime. At the same time the inflated lifestyle of many of the country's religious, political and civic leaders has encouraged expectations beyond the means of most Bahamians, works minister Loftus Roker observed recently.

The tendency to view agriculture and fisheries as inferior occupations has affected both unemployment and the balance of payments. Energy and food imports now absorb over US\$275m in foreign exchange earnings. Food alone accounted for some US\$150m last year, although more than half of that could have been produced locally.

With a general election due some time this year (RC-81-10), the government has embarked on a large-scale social welfare programme which the parliamentary opposition maintains has been made necessary by the administration's shortsighted policies. It seems unlikely that many of these schemes will survive the election. As a result of the economy's poor performance in 1981, the government was forced to reduce capital expenditure by an estimated 42.2 per cent last year. Similar cuts can be expected in 1982.

No new taxes have been proposed for the current year, but it is difficult to see how these can be avoided in 1983, given the size of the public debt. It is apparent however that the government is once more counting on foreign investment to provide a 'quick fix' as it did following the 1977 election. Land sale restrictions, which were intended to reduce foreign ownership, have been softened to encourage time-share resorts as a long-term solution to the tourism decline. And Hanna, emphasising the importance of food production, has called for large-scale investment by both foreigners and Bahamians to exploit the country's agricultural potential. (1)

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COUNTRY SECTION

COLOMBIA

BRIEFS

INDIAN CONGRESS DENOUNCES SLI--Bogota, 26 Feb (PL)--The First National Indian Congress of Colombia denounced the negative effect of the Summer Linguistics Institute (SLI) on their communities. In a document of presentation to the event which brings together 70 communities and 2,000 delegates from all over the country, opposition was voiced to penetration by SLI and other missions in the tribes designed to impose a new culture. The congress whose deliberations will run through Sunday, also denounced the war waged against the Indians by the Colombian narcotics traffickers and landlords. Indian leader Emilio Ejuegia charged that in the past 19 weeks, 19 Indian people were killed by landlords. The congress, which brings together the Colombian Indians for the first time, is meeting under the watchword "unity, land and culture." [Text]
[PA260055 Havana PRELA in English 2333 GMT 25 Feb 82]

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COUNTRY SECTION

CUBA

LACK OF WESTERN SUPPORT FOR UNESCO, IPDC SCORED

PA241953 Havana PRELA in English 2015 GMT 23 Feb 82

[Pool item]

[Text] New Delhi, 24 Feb (PL)--Cuba charged in this capital that the Western powers continue stubbornly refusing to support the International Program for the Development of Communications (IPDC), as well as the UNESCO.

Sergio Montane, head of the Cuban delegation to the experts meeting of the Intergovernmental Council for the Coordination of Information Between Non-Aligned Countries, stated that right now there is a most urgent need to strengthen that program and defend the principle of multilateral action, through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The official of the Non-Aligned Department of the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Cuba said that it must not be permitted that the IPDC should serve as cover so that the private transnational corporations may use it in their strategies of expansion and control.

That program was adopted in Acapulco, Mexico, in January.

When speaking during the sessions of this meeting of experts, opened by the Indian minister of information and radio broadcasting, Vasant Sathe, Montane stated that the Intergovernment Council should be the one that should select the projects, and not the monopolist consortiums.

Our objective is to develop autonomously the new international information and communications order, he stated.

In the opinion of the head of the Cuban delegation, the new international information order not solely represents a re-ordering of the communications infrastructure, but a desire for social and political change, without which that goal will be unable to be reached.

With the coordinated action of our countries we will be able to strengthen the new information order that the peoples' lovers of justice, peace, understanding and mutual respect are demanding, he added.

The deliberations of the experts of the Intergovernmental Council of the Non-Aligned Movement, that just terminated, were aimed at preparing recommendations that will be analyzed at the ministerial level in a meeting planned for the middle of the year in Malta.

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COUNTRY SECTION

CUBA

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE WITH JAPAN ENDS, PROTOCOL SIGNED

PA181539 Havana PRELA in Spanish 0250 GMT 18 Feb 82

[Report by Victorio M. Copa]

[Text] Havana, 17 Feb (PL)--Ending its sixth meeting, the Japan-Cuban economic conference signed here today a protocol on aspects of interest in bilateral relations.

The document was signed by Foreign Trade Minister Ricardo Cabrizas and (Ryoichi Kawai), president of the Japan-Cuba economic conference, which was established 6 years ago.

(Kawai), who headed a delegation made up of 37 businessmen from 20 important Japanese industrial, commercial and banking firms, returned to Tokyo after spending 4 days in Cuba.

The agreement notes that means and methods to promote greater development in their bilateral relations in the trade, financial and technical fields were analyzed.

It stressed that the meeting was fruitful and that it involved a frank exchange of views regarding the present situation and the outlook of economic ties between Cuba and Japan.

The two sides agreed on the importance of greater Cuban participation in imports to Japan, particularly in sugar, the main national export.

Cuba urged Japan to increase its cooperation regarding the marketing possibilities of other Cuban exports.

The two sides appreciated the importance that more medium and long-term credits has for the development of bilateral trade.

They also agreed on the advisability of getting adequate short-term financing for Japanese exports.

The sixth meeting reviewed ways that would permit the expansion of bilateral economic cooperation, the final document signed this afternoon stated.

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Regarding this, the conference thoroughly discussed the possibility of creating mixed enterprises for tourism and industrial production in Cuba.

Japan expressed its interest in this and pointed out that it is willing to study all the Cuban information on the proposed investment goals.

Taking into consideration the importance that tourism has in the development of relations between the two countries, the two sides decided to create a committee for tourism.

The Cuban delegation headed by Cabrizas reiterated its interest in signing an intergovernment agreement for economic, industrial and technical cooperation.

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COUNTRY SECTION

CUBA

BRIEFS

DETAILS ON PDRY AGREEMENT--Havana, 23 Feb (PL)--Cuba and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen signed here an agreement in the fields of work and social security for the years 1982-1986. The document establishes the collaboration in the fields of wages, labor organization, material stimulae and the use of labor resources, professional skill, social security and safer working conditions. The document was signed by the ministers of the State Committee of Labor and Social Security of Cuba, Joaquin Benavides and of Labor and Civilian Service of the Yemen People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Nasir Nasir Ali. [Text] [PA231901 Havana PRELA in English 1810 GMT 22 Feb 82]

CANADIAN FISHERY MINISTRY DELEGATES--Havana, 19 Feb [date as received] (PL)--Cuban President Fidel Castro welcomed here a Canadian delegation of the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans, headed by Vice-Prime Minister G. B. Vernon. A wide exchange of opinions on the international fishing situation and the collaboration in this field between Cuba and Canada took place during the meeting, it was officially reported. Along with Fidel Castro there were also present among others the chairman of the National Assembly of Peoples Power Flavio Bravo, the First Deputy Minister Antonio Esquievel and the Minister of Fishery Jorge Fernandez Cuervo. The Canadian Ambassador to Cuba James Bartleman also took part in the meeting. [Text] [PA182240 Havana PRELA in English 1923 GMT 18 Feb 82]

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COUNTRY SECTION

EL SALVADOR

FMLN, FDR COMMUNIQUE DENOUNCES ELECTION FARCE

PA020259 Havana PRELA in English 2015 GMT 1 Mar 82

[Text] San Jose, 2 Mar (PL)--The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Revolutionary Democratic Front [FDR] denounced as a farce the elections prepared by the Salvadoran oligarchy and armed forces with United States support.

FMLN and FDR in recalling on 28 February the 5th anniversary of the last "electoral slaughter" pulled by the military, indicate that the "dictatorship that clamors for foreign intervention is living its last days."

They indicated that now the Salvadoran people do not believe in such elections as those called for 28 March which recalls the massacre of San Salvador's central park in 1977 ordered by the same oligarchy and carried out by the fascistic military nucleus that now promises elections.

"The Catholic Church of the Rosary located opposite Liberty Park in San Salvador was the scene of the mass murder. Its floors, altars and images were bathed with the blood of hundreds of persons who took refuge to try to save their lives," states the communique.

The FMLN and the FDR recall that on the morning of 28 February 1977 everything had ended and the "conclusion of that hard lesson was the full conviction of the utter impossibility of a change of government through peaceful means."

They add that the fire fighters hosed the park, the streets and the church to get rid of the pools of blood shed with the agreement of the United States, by the oligarchs and the military who today prepare once again to stage an election under gunfire.

The communique states that the Salvadoran people "through their political military vanguards that constitute the genuine peoples army, advance, more every day and do not believe in elections of the kind being prepared by the military Christian Democratic junta for 28 March."

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COUNTRY SECTION

EL SALVADOR

'PRELA' REPORTS VILLALOBOS STATEMENT TO VENCEREMOS

PA152030 Havana PRELA in English 1953 GMT 15 Feb 82

[Text] San Jose, 16 Feb (PL)--Salvadoran guerrilla Commander Joaquin Villalobos said that the forces of the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) paralyzed an army offensive in the department of Morazan.

In statements to "Radio Venceremos," he pointed out that FMLN forces, acting with greater speed than before, attacked enemy positions in Perquin, Torla, Puente Manguera, Cerro de El Tigre, Osicala and Santa Rose de Lima.

These generalized harrassing actions against enemy positions in the department of Morazan have obliged the enemy to go on the offensive [as received; "defensive"]; within the operation that allegedly had offensive ends against our positions, said Villalobos.

He added that in first place "this means that the forces of the FMLN can immediately take counteroffensive position that, joined to the blocking of the enemy in the southeastern front, is going to produce new victories."

The guerrilla commander stated, on the other hand, that the FMLN forces have begun to hit out at the army in San Salvador, the country's capital, at a very difficult time for the Christian Democrat military junta, "since a large part of its forces are in the east of the country."

In second place, he underlined, "we have divided the country in two with the actions that took place on the morning of February 14 with blows in the zone close to the Lempa River, in San Vicente Department."

He underlined that the attacks in three main directions cut the Panamerican Highway and incursions against the positions of the armed forces in the city of San Vicente were carried out.

Villalobos said that the FMLN combatants stopped the junta's army from concluding its offensive in Morazan Department; "ourselves carrying out a more aggressive action against its forces."

At the same time he revealed that the offensive that the enemy tried to launch in Usulután Department was totally obstructed "and we immediately went over to the counteroffensive."

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The guerrilla commander added that all those actions of the FMLN have to be added to acts of sabotage to transport and communications "that have practically destabilized the country at the national level."

"We can conclude--said Villalobos lastly--that very shortly our forces will be in a position to hit the enemy throughout the country and this is going to bring us immediate victories."

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COUNTRY SECTION

EL SALVADOR

FMLN LEADER SAYS STRUGGLE AT 'DECISIVE STAGE'

PA162006 Havana PRELA in Spanish 2310 GMT 15 Feb 82

[Text] Mexico City, 15 Feb (PL)--The popular insurrection in El Salvador is at a decisive stage, Ferman Cienfuegos, one of the top FMLN commanders, said.

In a statement to the Mexican daily UNO MAS UNO, Cienfuegos warned that "the U.S. Government must either intervene massively in El Salvador or accept negotiations with the FMLN, which would permit a halt to the bloodbath afflicting our people."

The guerrilla leader maintained that the withdrawal of U.S. military aid for the Salvadoran regime would facilitate the initiation of negotiations and the fall of the Christian Democratic military junta.

As for Washington's fears that the FMLN will assume power to establish a Marxist-Leninist government, Cienfuegos said that nothing is farther from the truth. "The FMLN would in fact assume power, but to establish a coalition government including the various forces that favor a political solution through negotiations," he noted.

He reiterated that the U.S. military aid is the only thing that keeps the junta in power and branded the recent statements by Jose Napoleon Duarte and Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia on the Salvadoran Army's need for U.S. war material to survive as "humiliating."

Cienfuegos said in the interview that with the guerrilla strike against the Ilopango military airport, the FMLN began a highly important military offensive against the Salvadoran Army.

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COUNTRY SECTION

EL SALVADOR

INSURRECTIONAL SPIRIT ON RISE, SAYS CIENFUEGOS

PA172246 Havana PRELA in Spanish 2145 GMT 16 Feb 82

[Text] Mexico City, 16 Feb (PL)--According to guerrilla Commander Ferman Cienfuegos, the attack on the Ilopango air base and the guerrilla incursions into the outskirts of San Salvador have strengthened the Salvadoran people's insurrectional spirit.

According to Cienfuegos, who is one of the FMLN's five commanders, the Salvadorans are only awaiting the order to begin staging big popular uprisings against the regime.

While the political organizations in the zones under FMLN control increase their insurrectional spirit, he indicated, in the principal Salvadoran cities, like San Salvador, San Miguel, Santa Ana and Usulután, committees that will support the urban insurrections are being organized.

First, he explained, we began sabotaging the bridges, then we began staging actions along the roads and now we are in the cities, staging actions in the workers' neighborhoods, even in the capital. This strengthens the people's morale and breaks the informational and propaganda cordon laid around the capital city's residents by the government.

San Salvador, Cienfuegos went on, was being presented as a showcase of peace, as an oasis, but today the entire world knows, both in the capital and abroad, that the war has already reached the cities and all parts of the country.

The guerrilla commander also told the local newsmen that while the Salvadoran people are becoming aware that the decisive battle for the dismantling of the military regime is nearing, the army has entered into a phase of institutional crisis due to the adventuresome policy of the U.S. high-ranking command.

The armed forces, he asserted, are keeping their men in total retreat. There is a general return to the garrisons. They have lost control throughout the country, while the troops in the garrisons express their dissatisfaction and weariness.

This crisis is evident, he explained, from the large number of soldiers who surrender--due to the good treatment we give to both prisoners and the

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- wounded--and from the troops' attempts to mutiny, as was the case in the San Carlos headquarters in the capital, where on 8 February a company asked the High Command to begin negotiating with the FMLN. Another incident occurred in the San Miguel headquarters, where six mutinous soldiers died.

According to the guerrilla leader, 26 soldiers are currently imprisoned in San Carlos, while 46 others were detained in Ilopango following a rebel attack.

- Cienfuegos added that, during the first week in February, a lieutenant executed five soldiers in Usulután because they refused to fight against the guerrillas.

- Another symptom of the current crisis within the army is the forced recruitment of children [as received] between the ages of 14 and 17 and the soldiers' resistance to fighting alongside the repressive bodies, such as the National Guard, he said in conclusion.

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COUNTRY SECTION

HAITI

DUVALIER'S BODYGUARDS REPORTED IN ARMED CLASH

PA260002 Havana PRELA in English 2350 GMT 25 Feb 82

[Text] Montreal, 26 Feb (PL)--An undisclosed number of dead and wounded among the civilian population was caused by an exchange of fire between the bodyguards of Haitian dictator Jean Claude Duvalier and the regime's Tontons Macoutes.

Reports from Port-au-Prince indicate that the Wednesday armed clash between groups vying for power took a toll of numerous victims among the population in the capital who were attending carnival festivities.

Clashes between the Leopards--a force trained by United States advisers--and the Tontons Macoutes have taken place in recent weeks, pointing up the cracks within the Duvalier regime.

The recent arrival of new advisers sent by Washington to upgrade the level of the Haitian army's elite forces appears to mean a regime bid to rely more on career military than on the Tontons Macoutes.

The political and social situation in Haiti is steadily deteriorating and the United States takes advantage of this to increase its military presence in that country and its territorial waters with warships, said Haitian exile sources here.

The recent changes in the Duvalier cabinet reportedly served to boost the weight of the United States in economic and social matters, thereby compounding the mounting U.S. military presence.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ST LUCIA

BRIEFS

VENEZUELAN ASSISTANCE--Venezuela is to make available US\$1.5m to St Lucia for low-cost housing and other programmes. This money formed the basis of two financial agreements recently signed with Venezuela. The housing programme will use US\$1m, at two per cent interest over 40 years. The remaining US\$0.5m will be a deposit loan made on the same terms. Further agreements are expected to follow this year in the fields of sewerage, roads and tourism. [Text] [London LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL REPORTS--CARIBBEAN in English 15 Jan 82 p 12] [COPYRIGHT: LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL REPORTS, 1982]

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